

Indian saree firm opens first UK store



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Indian luxury silk firm opens first UK store in London after receiving support from the UK's Department for International Trade.

Demand for sarees for wedding season and Covid-19 travel restrictions prompted the firm to fast track the project.

Nalli Silks' sarees have previously been gifted to King George V and Queen Elizabeth II.

Indian luxury silk firm, Nalli Silks, has opened its first UK store in London with support from the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) to meet the demand ahead of the busy wedding and festive season later this year.

The investment of approximately £300,000 will include a 2,500 square feet store in Wembley with up to 8 members of staff. The firm, which previously gifted sarees to King George V and Queen Elizabeth, is expected to open more stores in London and Birmingham to serve UK customers.

With a presence in the US, Singapore and Canada, the firm began searching for opportunities to expand in the UK prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. DIT officials in Chennai and London have been working with Nalli over the past 18 months to help facilitate site visits in the UK, introductions to key accounting and tax services, and updates on Covid-19 related support measures – including the Retail Bounce back announced by Exports Minister Graham Stuart in September.

Minister for Investment Gerry Grimstone said:

I am delighted to welcome Nalli Silk to the vibrant cadre of many Indian companies present in the UK, which support jobs in this country across all sectors.

As both the Indian and UK economies recover from the impact of Covid-19, increasing investment in each other's markets is more important than ever. Brands like Nalli Silk are sterling examples of the opportunities available to Indian businesses if they wish to sell high-quality goods to a strong base of customers in the UK, including an Indian diaspora of 1.5 million people.

I look forward to seeing their continued success, and supporting other businesses looking to the UK as their next market .

Vice Chairman Ramnath Nalli said:

Our South Asian customers living in the UK are some of our most vocal and passionate patrons. When our friendly skies were still friendly, almost every week we would greet a few UK customers at our flagship stores in India, requesting for a Nalli store nearby. Soon we started receiving social media requests from non-Indian brides asking advice on saris for their bridesmaids (or themselves) as more and more people go in for themed Indian weddings held in their own locales, or as a destination wedding.

We're very happy on this joyous occasion to finally be coming to the UK – London first, and then Birmingham soon after! We are bringing our very best, hand selected pieces just for this market and are excited to see the reception.

Established in Chennai in 1928, Nalli is a textile brand steeped in tradition. When King George V visited India in 1911, the Indian state of Tamil Nadu gifted the king a hand-crafted Kanchipuram Silk Saree from the company as a souvenir. As this was the year of the King's coronation, Nalli wove a rich silk saree with a special coronation-themed border to mark the occasion. Similarly, Queen Elizabeth II was gifted with a Nalli Silk saree by the state of Tamil Nadu for her coronation in 1954.

This investment follows a number of positive DIT-supported Indian retail investments into the UK, including Delhi-based heritage occasion wear retailer Frontier Raas, and Mumbai-based luxury fashion house Purple Style Labs.

Trade between the UK and India increased by 10% from the previous year, to £24 billion in 2019. At this year's Joint Economic Trade Committee, the UK and India agreed to deliver an Enhanced Trade Partnership to deepen this important trade relationship.

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